

Thought Record

Each time you have a stressful thought, add it to the Thought Record below. Record the date and time the stressful thought began. Record the situation related to the stressful thought. In the third column, record the stressful thought. In column four, rate the stressful thought, and label your emotion (e.g., worry, anger). Come up with thoughts to counter (i.e., minimizers) the stressful thought and record them in the fifth column. The sixth column is used to re-rate the amount of worry after determining minimizers. Examine your thoughts for patterns. For example: How frequently do I worry? When do I worry? What do I usually worry about? How strong is my worry?

Date/Time	Situation	Stressful Thought	Rating 1-10	Minimizers	Re-Rate 1-10

Stress Resource Guide

Stress Management Techniques

Relaxation (Diaphragmatic) Breathing

1. Sit or lie down with your shoulders straight
2. Breathe in through your nose (or pursed lips) – see your stomach rise (use a pillow)
3. Breathe out through your nose (or pursed lips) – see your stomach fall
4. Pause a moment
5. Continue 15– 20 minutes

Guided Imagery

1. Find a comfortable position
2. Relax and concentrate on breathing
3. Keep an open attitude
4. Pick a visual theme (e.g. beach, forest)
5. Allow your mind to develop the image
6. Use all of your senses

Online Resources

The following resources link to free examples of diaphragmatic breathing, guided imagery, and additional stress management techniques, such as progressive muscle relaxation (PMR), keeping a thought record, and relaxation response. In addition, using YouTube, you can search for any of the techniques to find free and helpful videos related to stress and stress management.

University of Florida Extension Stress Management Workshop

Includes a seven-part course on stress management, which includes breathing exercises, visualization, and muscle relaxation workshops.

Visit the [University of Florida Extension Stress Management Workshop website](http://hillsborough.ifas.ufl.edu/family_life/stress_management.shtml) at http://hillsborough.ifas.ufl.edu/family_life/stress_management.shtml

Georgia Southern University

Contains an online stress management workshop and online relaxation exercises, including diaphragmatic breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, guided imagery, and a thought record worksheet.

Visit the [Georgia Southern University at website](http://students.georgiasouthern.edu/counseling/resources/self-help/relaxation-and-) <http://students.georgiasouthern.edu/counseling/resources/self-help/relaxation-and->

stress-management/

Mayo Clinic Meditation Video

This Mayo Clinic instructional video offers a guided meditation session to help you relax.

Visit the [Mayo Clinic Meditation Video website](http://www.mayoclinic.org/meditation/vid-20084741) at www.mayoclinic.org/meditation/vid-20084741

McMaster University Guided Relaxation CD

The McMaster University Guided Relaxation CD includes free MP3 audio tracks for diaphragmatic breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, autogenic training, and guided imagery.

Visit the [McMaster University Guided Relaxation CD website](http://wellness.mcmaster.ca/resources/relaxation/relaxation.html) at <http://wellness.mcmaster.ca/resources/relaxation/relaxation.html>

Podcasts

Podcasts are free and can be downloaded from the iTunes Store by using the search string “managing stress,” “relaxation,” “relaxation music,” and “breathing” to find the titles listed below.

You can listen to podcasts through the iTunes stores or download for later viewing. You can also subscribe to podcasts to receive content from the same author.

- Managing Stress with Jones Bartlett – PMR and Autogenic Training Sessions
- Great Relaxation Music (or visit the [Great Relaxation Music website](http://www.greatrelaxationmusic.com) at www.greatrelaxationmusic.com)
- Relaxation Meditation with Lita Stone
- Wellness Workbook Guided Relaxation Exercises
- George Mason University – Guided Imagery, Mindfulness Meditation, PMR and Breathing Exercises.

Mobile Applications

Mobile applications are also available from the iTunes Store for iPhone and iPad. Similar apps are also available for other smartphone devices. Those listed below are free; although, data charges may apply.

- Nature Space Holographic Audio Theater (Visualization)
- National Center for Telehealth Technology Breathe 2 Relax (Guided Breathing)
- Pranayama (Guided Breathing)
- Silva Relaxation (Relaxation Exercises)

Stress Busting Strategies

- ✓ Journal about your stress and worry
 - Keep track of the times you feel stressed in a journal. Note the source of stress, how it made you feel, and what you did in response. Also, record whether the way you dealt with the situation helped you feel less stressed. This will help you identify common stressors in your life and how you deal with them.
- ✓ Limit worry to a specific time of day
 - Allot yourself time to worry each day. During this time, allow yourself to think worrisome or stressful thoughts. Do your best to not think about these negative thoughts during any other part of the day.
- ✓ Tolerate and understand uncertainty
 - Take time to address stressful situations and the uncertainty they may bring. Recognize stressful situations that you cannot change, and do your best to accept or tolerate life stressors that are out of your control.
- ✓ Focus on the present
 - Do not dwell on what happened in the past or what might happen in the future. Directing your awareness to the situation at hand increases mindfulness, which can help reduce stress.
- ✓ Do a physical activity
 - Exercise can improve your quality of sleep and increase immune system functioning. Exercise can also increase endorphin production in your body.
- ✓ Talk to a friend
 - Having a strong network of social support can alleviate and help you cope with stress. “Having a conversation can add different perspectives, allow our frustration to vent, and give us a feeling of community instead of isolation. Remember you are not alone and many others face similar hardships” (Balla, 2012).
- ✓ Slow down your breathing
 - Concentrated breathing can help reduce the stress response. When you feel stressed, take a moment to focus on breathing slowly and rhythmically.
- ✓ Relax your body
 - Use techniques like the ones we learned today to relax your body. Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR) is another technique to help your body relax. PMR is the practice of slowly tensing specific muscle groups for a period of time and then relaxing them.